

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 12503 010859Z

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2852

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 12503

E.O. 11652: GDS, DECEMBER 31, 1981

TAGS: SOPN, IT

SUBJECT: INTERVIEW REQUEST

FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER FROM AMBASSADOR VOLPE

1. DURING TIME OF GREAT UNCERTAINTY OVER ITALY'S POLITICAL FUTURE AND DISARRAY AMONG MODERATES, I AM CONCERNED THAT RESOLVE OF U.S., ESPECIALLY ATTITUDES TOWARD COMMUNISTS SHARING POWER IN ALLIED COUNTRIES, IS IN DOUBT. THERE HAS BEEN WIDE-SPREAD PRESS SPECULATION IN LEFTIST AND MODERATE PRESS THAT THE U.S. IS CHANGING ITS POLICY TOWARDS THE PCI AND OUR POLITICAL FRIENDS IN THE DC TELL US THESE SPECULATIONS ARE HAVING A WORRISOME EFFECT AT THE GRASS ROOTS LEVEL OF THE PARTY. AS MAJOR STEP TO CLARIFY SITUATION AND SUPPORT THOSE RESISTING COMMUNIST MOMENTUM, I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT YOU GRANT AN INTERVIEW TO ENZO BETTIZA, ONE OF ITALY'S MOST WIDELY-HEEDED AND KNOWLEDGEABLE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMENTATORS. HIS NEWSPAPER, IL GIORNALE NUOVO OF MILAN (CIRC. 260,000) HAS IN ITS ONE YEAR OF EXISTENCE ESTABLISHED ITSELF AS ONE OF ITALY'S THREE MOST INFLUENTIAL PAPERS, REGULARLY READ BY THE POLITICAL AND OPINION-MAKING ELITE. BETTIZA AND HIS PAPER STAND CLOSE TO THE POLITICAL CENTER, AND BETTIZA HIMSELF HAS CONSISTENTLY SHOWN HIS UNDERSTANDING OF AN SUPPORT FOR YOUR VARIOUS INITIATIVES, ESPECIALLY IN EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST. HE HAS ALSO WRITTEN BOOKS ON GERMANY, EUROPE, AND THE USSR, THE LATTER BASED ON HIS EXPERIENCES AS A CORRESPONDENT THERE. AN INTERVIEW WITH HIM NOW, PUTTING IN RENEWED PERSPECTIVE US-ITALY RELATIONSHIP AND VIABILITY OF PRESENT AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY, COULD

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PAGE 02 ROME 12503 010859Z

DO MUCH TO ARREST FEELING AMONG MANY THAT SITUATION IN ITALY

COULD ERODE THROUGH AMERICAN INDIFFERENCE OR ACCOM-
MODATION TO PCI. IT WOULD ALSO SIGNAL U.S. SYMPATHY FOR
FORCES OF DEMOCRATIC MODERATION HERE AND GIVE BOOST TO
IL GIORNALE, WHOSE CONTINUED STRENGTH IS NECESSARY FOR
PERSUASIVE EXPRESSION OF MODERATE VIEWPOINT. WITH FULL
AWARENESS OF THE HEAVY DEMANDS ON YOUR SCHEDULE AND YOUR
USUAL POLICY REGARDING INTERVIEW REQUESTS OF THIS TYPE, I
NEVERTHELESS URGE YOU TO MAKE THIS EXCEPTION BECAUSE OF
IMPACT YOUR ACCEPTANCE WOULD HAVE IN CONTEXT OF CURRENT
DANGEROUS SLIDE OF ITALIAN POLITICS.

2. BETTIZA SPEAKS ENGLISH AND IS PLANNING A LATE SEPTEMBER
TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES. USIS IS ASSISTING IN MAKING
APPOINTMENTS FOR HIM WITH VARIOUS AMERICANS IN ACADEMIC,
BUSINESS, AND GOVERNMENTAL CIRCLES. VOLPE

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